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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/528,769	04/19/2005	Lauri Eskola	032221-058	4689
21839	7590	02/27/2007		
BUCHANAN, INGERSOLL & ROONEY PC			EXAMINER	
POST OFFICE BOX 1404			SWINEHART, EDWIN L	
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22313-1404			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3617	
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE		MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE	
3 MONTHS		02/27/2007	PAPER	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/528,769	ESKOLA, LAURI
	Examiner Ed Swinehart	Art Unit 3617

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 November 2006.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1,2 and 6-9 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1,2 and 6-9 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 1,6 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1 as amended is unclear. Specifically "comprising the steps" implies a multitude of method steps, while only a single step is present in claim 1, i.e. "introducing flushing water...".

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1,6 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by GB '739.

GB '739 discloses the claimed method step, including the introduction of a flow of water into the immediate vicinity of an outer seal of a propeller shaft. The remaining elements recited within the "wherein" clause of the claim do not further limit the method step, and as such, does not define over GB '739.

GB '739 further provides an annular member **22** surrounding the shaft and outer oil lubricated seal **8**, and having a water distribution pipe **21** with an opening for causing

water to flow from within the annular member to within a space between the propeller and hull to prevent debris from reaching the outer face of the sealing elements. Since the flow distribution duct 21 is contained in an area within the annular member, such is considered to be an "internal" duct.

Re claims 6 and 8, such fail to further limit the recited method, and as such are accorded no weight.

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 2,7 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over GB '739 in view of Smealie.

GB '739 is discussed above, and fails to provide for substantially uniform distribution of clean water about the shaft.

Smealie teaches multiple points of water introduction.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide a plurality of water introduction ports to GB '739 as taught by Smealie.

Such a combination would have been desirable so as to assure more even distribution.

7. Applicant's arguments filed 11/17/2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues that GB '739 fails to disclose an annular member disposed about the outer seal, and the annular member establishing a flow of fluid towards the propeller shaft, as set forth in claim 1.

In response, claim 1 does not require such an arrangement, as such is but a single method step, that of introducing flushing water to an immediate vicinity of an outer seal, which is clearly provided by GB '739.

Applicant argues that GB '739 does not provide the water to flush debris, but to lubricate the bearing.

The water introduced into the annular space defined by the rope guard is not for lubrication of the seal, but to introduce fresh water into the vicinity of the seal, as in the present invention. Lubricating fluid to the bearings is done through conduit **11**, and such is oil, as GB '739 states on page 2 the preventing of oil from reaching the shaft. GB '739 further states that the fresh water supply is for preventing sand from entering into the space inside the rope guard, and inherently sand is considered debris. Since fresh water can be assumed to completely fill the space inside the rope guard, such a guard therefore causes the fresh water to flow in all directions therewithin, including towards the propeller shaft at some point, or else the stated purpose of surrounding the bearings with fresh water would not be achieved.

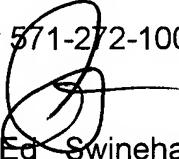
8. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ed Swinehart whose telephone number is 571-272-6688. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday 6:30 am to 2:00 pm..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Samuel Morano can be reached on 571-272-6684. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



Ed Swinehart
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3617